THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI U.V. KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The number of BPL families as per the Government of India estimates in Andhra Pradesh in 40.63 lakhs against which the State Government has identified 113 lakh families. The State-wise number of BPL families have been worked out as per the poverty estimates of the Planning Commission for the year 1993-94 adopting the methodology of the Expert Group applied to the population projections of the Registrar General as on 1.3.2000. This basis is being uniformly applied for allocation of foodgrains to all BPL families in the country without exception and cannot be changed for any one State in isolation.

Abolition of Essential Commodities Act

†928. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to abolish the Essential Commodities Act; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps being taken by Government for consumer protection?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) There is at present no such proposal under consideration of the Government.

(b) Does not arise.

Recovery for storage and transit loss of Foodgrains

929. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether FCI authorities have started recovery as well as other penal action on employees as well as official of north eastern region responsible for handing storage and transit loss in excess of the permissible limits;

(b) if so, the criteria on which accountability is fixed and the number of staff brought under the purview of such penal action; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.